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**STREET CAR STRIKE**

**MUNICIPAL  
OWNERSHIP**

Addresses by

**WILLIAM PRENTISS**

## NOTE.

The first of these speeches was delivered during the street-car strike of the employees of the Chicago City Railway Co. The meeting was held at Tattersalls, the Seventh Regiment Armory, Sunday afternoon, November 22, 1903. There were in the hall at the time about 15,000 people, and nearly as many more on the outside adjacent thereto.

The second address was delivered in the Council Chamber of the City Hall. There were present, besides the Transportation Committee, about one hundred other citizens. This was December 7, 1903, the first day of the hearing before the committee.

25 Nov 1903

## THE CITY RAILWAY STRIKE AND MUNICIPAL OWNERSHIP.

SPEECH OF WILLIAM PRENTISS, AT TATTERSALL'S, CHICAGO, SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1903.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

You know as well as I what brought you here this afternoon. You are in the midst of one of the most important struggles in the history of this country, or any other. On one side are millions of ill-gotten wealth and on the other are justice and manhood and womanhood. It is not a contest merely between the Chicago City Railway and Division Number 260 of the Street Railway men. Organized capital has seen fit to make this a vital contest, and has arrayed against the working men and the common people of this country all the forces that money can get together.

I want to call your attention—and, through you, the attention of the people of this city—to what the Chicago City Railway Company is. It was the first street railway corporation in Chicago. It began with almost nothing—one hundred thousand dollars capital, a mile of road, twenty-five horses and four cars. From that

it has become the wealthiest street railway corporation that ever existed in the world, and every dollar of that added wealth came out of the men, women and children of Chicago.

I have here a little book (holding up a book). It is not a book issued by an advocate of municipal ownership. It is not a book issued by laboring men. It is a book issued by the Civic Federation of Chicago—the aristocratic economists of this city. Among the members of it were such men as Franklin H. Head, Franklin MacVeagh, Edwin Burritt Smith, Newton A. Partridge, and others like them. It was issued about two years ago—in 1901—and it gives a history of the street railways of Chicago. It obtained the facts from the books of the street railway corporations, which for the first time opened them to anyone outside of the companies; and the Civic Federation employed experts to examine the books. I wish every citizen in the City of Chicago could read this book. It would show them that in sixteen years—from 1882 to 1898—there was distributed in dividends to the stockholders of the Chicago City Railway Company over *thirty-seven millions of dollars*; that upon the capital invested they received annually for those sixteen years over 44 per cent interest in the way of profits.

Now what has this Railway Company done in return for this? You may know what we lawyers all know, that the decisions of our Supreme Court are reported in volumes. Every decision is written out and is published in a book, and in Volume 191 of these Illinois Reports there is a very interesting decision. You can get the Report in the Public Library or in the Law Institute or in the office of almost any lawyer. I wish



that the people of this city could read this decision in that Report. It is found on page 528 (Vol. 191), the title of the case being *State Board of Equalization v. the People of the State of Illinois*.

In 1900 the school teachers of this city discovered that the public service corporations of Chicago were not paying taxes upon their capital stock, including franchises; that all they had paid and were paying was upon a comparatively small amount of tangible property which they possessed; that upon their most valuable property—their franchises—they were paying practically nothing. So the teachers, under the leadership of two of the ablest and truest women of this or any other country (Catherine Goggin and Margaret A. Haley), proceeded to examine into it. They went before the State Board of Equalization, whose duty under the law was to assess this capital stock, including franchises, and informed them what they had found.

This State Board of Equalization is the servant of the people. You elect that Board, and the members are sworn to obey the law and perform their duties under it, and yet for years twenty or more of these great public service corporations in this city had paid practically no tax upon the great amount of wealth they possessed. At the head of the list of these criminal tax-dodgers was the Chicago City Railway Company. For nearly twenty years that Railway Company paid no tax of any consequence upon its capital stock—during almost the entire life of the franchise which it obtained in 1883. It, with other rich public service corporations in this city, had yearly gone down to the State Board of Equalization at Springfield and “persuaded” that body in the way they know so well to relieve them of their just taxes. That corporation has not on the average for twenty years paid more than about one-twentieth of the tax that it should have paid. For every

twenty dollars that was due the people in taxes it only paid one.

Now, why do I speak of this? I will tell you why: Does the working man who owns a little home or has a little personal property escape taxation? (Cries of "No, no.") He pays every dollar of the taxes lawfully due from him, and often much more. And yet, what have you seen in this city recently? You have seen that lawless corporation, the Chicago City Railway Company, that has failed and refused to pay its just taxes for years, having appropriated for its exclusive use one-half of the entire police force of this city, while the honest, law-abiding citizens of this city, who pay their taxes, have been compelled to go without police protection entirely during the last ten days. And this in order that this lawless corporation should have the police force of the city used to run its street cars for it.

I concede that it is the duty of the executive of this city to keep the peace; there is no doubt about that; and no law-abiding citizen wants the Mayor to do anything else; but I submit, is it not his duty equally to keep the burglar from the home of the honest citizen, and to protect the honest citizen who may be walking to or from his home at night free from being attacked by highwaymen? (Cries of "That's right.") Isn't that his duty as much as it is to send the police force to protect and **help a lawless** corporation that hasn't paid its just taxes in twenty years? (Loud applause.)

Now, who are these policemen? Who pays them? The tax-payers of Chicago pay them. The Chicago City Railway doesn't pay them. Yet practically one-half of the entire police force of the city is used to protect and guard its property, while the honest, tax-paying, law-abiding citizens of Chicago have to defend themselves, single-handed and alone, against burglary and rob-

bery and every other crime that may be committed in the community. (Loud and continued applause.)

I agree with Mayor Harrison that it is his duty to uphold the law, keep the peace and protect life and property, but the honest working man and the honest citizen have the same right to be protected as a big railroad corporation. (Cries of "That's right," and loud applause.) Another thing—when you get into a quarrel with your neighbor the law doesn't step in and help the great big fellow lick the little one, does it? (Cries of "No, sir"). The law makes both of you keep the peace, and then it says to you "Go to the courts to settle or arbitrate your difficulties:" (cries of "Gives justice to both"). The law says "Go to the courts and settle your difficulties or arbitrate them; we cannot take sides between you." But here is a controversy between this railroad company and its employes, and the employes say, "Come to court, let's arbitrate this trouble between us; let's settle it as men should always be willing to settle troubles between themselves." The men have proposed every form of arbitration. They said to this street railway corporation long before this strike commenced, "We will pick one man, you pick another man; let those two select a third, and we will submit our case to them, and will abide by their decision." And they said more: The men said, "We want the investigation to be public. We want the people of Chicago and the press of Chicago to know all about this controversy, and to judge between the Chicago City Railway Company and its employes." But the Street Car Company said, "No, we won't do that; we won't arbitrate." They said: "We will settle our way or not at all" The State Board of Arbitration, as was its duty under the law, intervened, and the street car employes said, "We will leave it to the State Board



of Arbitration to settle." But the Company said, "*No*," again and again. Then when the strike began, Mr. Bliss and Mr. Hamilton, the General Counsel and the President of the Chicago City Railway Company, went straightway to the Mayor of the city and *demand*ed police protection for their cars (cries of "They got it). They had said, "We won't arbitrate; we won't settle this difficulty in a peaceable way; we won't settle it as honest men ought to settle it"; but now they said, "We *demand* that you, Mr. Mayor, take the police force—all of it, if necessary—to protect our property in this city" (cries of "and got the city's protection"). And this demand was acceded to.

Now, gentlemen, what is the situation? Here is a corporation that has been getting nickels out of the people continuously ever since 1859 until it has made great fortunes for its stockholders. It has refused to treat fairly with its employes; it has refused to pay its just taxes; it has so far as it could brought chaos in the City of Chicago; it has opened the way to the burglar and the robber and other criminals in one-half of the City of Chicago. And yet, in the face of all this, and more, it has the audacity to say to the Mayor and City Council of Chicago, "Give me another twenty years' privilege to rob and outrage the people of Chicago." (Loud applause.)

I hold in my hand a book—you see the size of it—nearly a foot long, and eight inches wide; it has sixty-seven pages in it. What do you suppose this is? It is a proposed ordinance *for* the Chicago City Railway Company. This is what this Chicago City Railway Company is asking of your servants, the Mayor and the City Council of this city. After months and months of negotiation with the Street Railway Company, last week this



ordinance was presented by the sub-committee of the Transportation Committee to the full committee as a tentative ordinance. This is the ordinance that the Chicago City Railway Company is to get from your servants and mine. (Cries of "No, no.") Why, do you suppose that our public officials would throw away all their valuable time? Do you suppose that the City of Chicago would hire two high-priced lawyers—Mr. Edwin Burritt Smith and Mr. John C. Mathis—and give them big pay, and that they would work out and produce (spending months of valuable time) and print a document like this if they did not intend to put it through? Our servants, our representatives, have printed this at our expense. They hired the lawyers, Mr. Smith and Mr. Mathis, at our expense, and these aldermen are paid out of the City Treasury. They have labored and brought forth this document *for* the Chicago City Railway Company. How much do you suppose this is worth? It is worth at least *fifty millions of dollars*—and General Manager McCulloch calls it "*our franchise*." Now, I want to know if this is going to be permitted in this city (cries of "No, no")? This Street Railway Company, if it had not felt sure that it was going to get this franchise, would not have dared to have forced this strike on Number 260. It assumed that as it had been lawless from the time it was created: that as it had heretofore gone to the City Council and had always gotten everything it asked for, that it could do about anything on the face of the earth it pleased, and that the people of this community would submit. But "there is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at its flood, leads on to fortune." That tide has come to the people of Chicago. Many times in the history of men has it been that a nation or a class has become so unreasonable, unjust and

arrogant as to precipitate a conflict that ended their careers forever. In the history of this country when the slaveholders undertook to perpetuate their favorite institution by force, and made war upon the Union of these states, they sounded the death knell of slavery. The Civil War thus begun abolished the favorite institution of the slaveholder forever.

My friends, a situation is upon us that is serious and important. Number 260 is going to win its fight; there need be no fear about that. When I read the other morning what Number 241 had done—that four thousand brave street car boys had voted five thousand dollars a week for the benefit of the boys of 260, and when I learned what the laboring men of Chicago and over the country were doing, I knew that the strike on the part of 260 was as sure to win as the sun was to go down today. But, my countrymen, this is not enough. At no time in its recent history has the Chicago City Railway Company been so weak as it is today. What do you suppose will happen to Number 260, or to any other Union of street car men that may be working for it, if that Company gets this twenty-year franchise? There is a remedy for all this: If you expect street cars to be run for the benefit of all the people, rather than for the benefit of a few rich men, they must be run *by* the people, *for* the people. If you expect the men who do the work and run the cars to be treated like men, to receive wages that men ought to receive, to receive the treatment and consideration that noble and true boys ought to receive, you must place their case in the hands of the honest people of this city (cries of “Aye, aye”). You can never trust a private corporation, for it will grind money out of men, women and children as it would grind it out of a piece of wood, iron or steel. They care for nothing but money (cries of “No”); they run the street cars for

money; they buy labor to make money out of it, and they want to buy it as cheap as possible. They don't care how many hours they make men work, or the hardships they endure. They don't care how many lives they take, if only they can make more money for idle millionaires. (loud and continued applause.) There is only one remedy for this—and that is municipal ownership. (Continued applause.)

In this Supreme Court case reported in 191 Ill., every single one of those corporations that had refused to pay its taxes and had annually "induced" the State Board of Equalization to violate the law and their oaths of office, and enable them to dodge their taxes, *was a public service corporation*. In the list are included all the big street railway companies in Chicago, the big Gas Company of Chicago, the Chicago Telephone Company, and every one of them was an institution that ought to be owned and controlled by the people themselves. (Applause.) Who is it that buys City Councils? Who is it that buys State Legislatures? Who is it that buys the National Congress? Who is it that bribes juries, and corrupts the servants of the people? It is these public service corporations that are doing work that ought to be done by the people themselves in their own interest.

This strike, this conflict between the Chicago City Railway Company and its employes, is an object lesson to the people of this city. It has, I hope, fully opened the eyes of the working men and women of Chicago. You have now an opportunity such as you will perhaps never have again in your lives. You have an opportunity such as may never again come to the people of Chicago. You have heard of Philadelphia—that city where independence was born; the place where the Declaration of Independence was written and proclaimed to the world—yet that old city, that once noble city, that



once grand city of Philadelphia, is today absolutely in the hands of its public service corporations, helpless as a babe.

When Virginia ceded the Northwest Territory to the United States, that territory, of which Illinois is a part, chiefly through the influence of the author of the Declaration of Independence, was made forever free from the blight of slavery. My countrymen, when you and your children and your grandchildren shall come to read the history of their country they will find no more interesting part than the history of Illinois. They will read that Illinois gave to America and the world the great liberator, Abraham Lincoln. (Applause.) They will read that in 1860, in the city of Chicago, Abraham Lincoln was nominated to the Presidency of the United States. They will read that in all the history of men there has been nothing like Chicago: We celebrated last month the Centennial of the building of Fort Dearborn. In one hundred years Chicago rose to a city of two millions of souls. In this city more extraordinary events have taken place within the same length of time than in any city in the world. In 1871 the greater part of it was burned to the ground, yet she was builded up again as no city ever was before, and that, too, by the laboring men of Chicago. (Great applause.) In 1892 and 1893 was celebrated in this city the discovery of America, by the World's Fair, and a most wonderful, a most marvellous exposition it was. Most extraordinary things have been accomplished by Chicago. *Chicago never yet undertook in dead earnest to do anything that it did not do.* (Applause.)

But now we have reached the most critical period in its history—and what shall be that history? Shall Chicago find herself bound hand and foot like Philadelphia (cries "No, no"), or shall Chicago break her fetters

and demand that the people of Chicago shall be free, and free forever? Shall they not say to these corrupt and corrupting public corporations, "You have already feasted and fattened too long upon the people of Chicago, we propose now to look after and attend to our own business, and see to it that the example of the great liberator of men—Abraham Lincoln—shall be followed." (Loud and continued applause.)

But, ah, they say "Chicago cannot own and operate her street railways." If the people of Chicago cannot do better than the Chicago City Railway has done, and better than the other street railways of Chicago have done, I would disown being one of her citizens. (Great applause.) I know that she *can* attend to her own business, and I believe that she *will* attend to her own business. (Applause.)

Somebody exclaimed, here in the audience the other night, that if these aldermen undertook to pass this franchise, "String them up! Hang them!" I wouldn't do that. You are law-abiding people; you wouldn't do that; you don't have to do that; Chicago doesn't do good work in that way. What we want to do is to make the members of that City Council and the Mayor remember that the people of Chicago are in the saddle. (Great applause.) They want to understand that the government of this city is the people's government; that the government of the state is the people's; that the government of the nation is ours—the people's—and that they belong to nobody else.

Suppose the Chicago City Railway Company should send an agent out to do business for it, and suppose the man it proposed to do business with should buy up its agent, what on earth would the Chicago City Railway do with that agent? (Cries of "Fire him.") Why, of

course, it would "fire" him, and send him to the penitentiary, too. Wouldn't it? (Cries "Yes, yes.")

My friends, we want to know by what authority these men in the City Council propose to grant this franchise to this Street Railway Company. They know that in doing so they would violate their obligations to the people of Chicago, because those men are not ignorant; *the people have instructed them on the question of municipal ownership*. In every ward in this city the people voted overwhelmingly, five to one, only a year ago last spring, for municipal ownership. (Applause.) Every one of the members of that Council have been instructed by their constituents to vote for municipal ownership, and yet that Council has been working for months to give a franchise to the Chicago City Railway Company, and has not spent one hour toward trying to get municipal ownership, not an hour in obeying the instructions of the people of this city. What is the matter, do you suppose? (Cries "No money in it.") What is the matter with them? (Cries "No money in it.") Ah, my friends, we want to let them know that the working men and women of Chicago made Chicago. The working men of Chicago can compel that Council to obey the voice of the people of Chicago (cries "We will do it")—and if they do not do it we will do like they do down in St. Louis. We will begin to "investigate" after awhile, and some of these fellows will tell on some of the other fellows; there are always "squeelers" among rogues—you never knew it to fail—and when they begin to "squeel" it will be a contest as to which one will get to "squeel" first. The first thing you know they will all want to "squeel," and then you will see some of them getting out of the United States of America just as quick as they can, in order to keep out of the penitentiary of the State of Illinois. (Loud applause.) That is what will happen, gentlemen.



This whole matter is in *your* hands—it is in the hands of the people of the City of Chicago.

What do you suppose will happen if you let this ordinance pass, and give the Chicago City Railway Company another franchise, and then give the Union Traction Company another franchise? (Cries “We won’t do it.”) Will you do that? (Cries “No, no.”) What will happen to the street car men then? (Cries “Slavery.”) If they will be so arrogant, so inhuman, so insolent as they have been thus far, what will they be then? Ah, my countrymen, the time, the opportunity is *now*. You must sign these Referendum petitions. See to it that all your voters in every Local sign that petition. Then see that that petition is sent up to the City Council. Then go to the City Council yourselves and see that the voice of that petition is heard, and see that it is obeyed. I want to tell you that no man is brave enough to stand against the voice of the united working men of the City of Chicago. (Loud applause.) I care not what influence street railway companies may have. Those men know that the voice of the people is the voice of God, and they will be getting down on their knees and humbly obeying it if you make it loud enough and unanimous enough.

This is a fight for humanity. It is the fight of the common people against a few big corporations. Through your laws they were made. They could not exist for a day but for you. They were created under laws made by representatives of the people. The people’s servants are bound to obey the people if the people but speak loud enough and strong enough.

I am glad to see so many of you here this afternoon. I know that the working men of this city are awake upon a public question as they have not been awake before. I am glad to know that there is no city in the world

where the working men stand together as unitedly as they do in the City of Chicago. (Applause.) I am glad to know that there is no city in the world where the working men are more intelligent, honest, faithful and conscientious than in Chicago. (Applause.) I am glad to know that the working men of Chicago have made up their minds that the streets of Chicago and the City of Chicago and the officials of Chicago belong to them, *because they are the people*. (Loud and continued applause.) If you will stand together you will get all you want. Let no man complain about the government—you have it in your power to make it what you want it to be. You could not have a more powerful weapon than the ballot—and when the right time comes you want to see to it that those servants who have proved recreant to their trusts are made servants no longer, and you want to see that men are placed in public position that represent you, represent your voice and your honest convictions. When that time comes you will find that you have at last a government “of the people, by the people, for the people,” in splendid reality. (Applause.)

Just a moment more and I shall close. One of the truest friends of the laboring cause was Henry D. Lloyd. He was one of the grandest men this or any other country ever knew. He braved obloquy and adverse criticism, to write and speak for the cause of laboring men. The last days of his life were spent in your cause, in Chicago's cause, in the cause of the public ownership of street railways in Chicago. He gave his life for that cause, and next Sunday afternoon a memorial service to his memory will be held at the Auditorium. Attend it, and show that you appreciate, respect and honor a man who was ready to die for the cause of the common people. (Great applause.)

Mr. Lloyd also wrote a little pamphlet on the street railway question here in Chicago; it sells for five cents—not enough to pay for the printing. See that you have one of those and circulate it among your neighbors, and in a short time there will not be an intelligent man or woman in the City of Chicago who is not in favor of municipal ownership, except it be “widows and orphans”—such as Mr. Field and Mr. Leiter, who own stock in street railways. (Applause.)

I am proud of the laboring people of Chicago; I am proud of Chciago; and it is now in your hands to make Chicago lead the world. Let Chicago have municipal ownership of street railways; let the City Council grant no more franchises to any private corporation to render public service, and you will find that the other cities of America—in the course of time, even lazy, corrupt old Philadelphia—will have municipal ownership, too. (Loud and continued applause.)

As I said, Chicago has given to the world some grand men—she gave Lincoln, and she gave Lyman Trumbull, the man whose right hand wrote the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, that abolished slavery—and she gave others. She has done some grand things, too (applause), and is destined yet to do some grander ones. By and through her honest, intelligent citizenship, chiefest among them being her working men and women, Chicago is soon to escape the thralldom of public service corporations and to lead the way among the cities of America in their march to the public ownership of all public utilities. (Great applause.)



ADDRESS OF WILLIAM PRENTISS BEFORE  
THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE OF  
THE CITY COUNCIL, CHICAGO, DECEMBER  
7TH, 1903.

Mr. Chairman, Gentlemen of the Committee, Ladies and  
Gentlemen :

I dislike very much to offer an apology at any time, much more so on occasions such as this; but, as perhaps some of you know, some of us have been engaged very busily for a number of weeks past in a matter that affected the entire community, more or less, and particularly the entire south side of the city, and as a considerable part of that labor fell upon me during that time, I find myself sick. I am only here today because I felt as though we ought at the earliest possible moment to accept the invitation of this Committee to be heard.

I am here to represent in part the Federation of Labor, the Municipal Ownership Delegate Convention and a number of other organizations and associations of citizens who have deep convictions and deep feelings upon these present questions. These are not public servants. They receive no salaries or pay from the public. They are not able to employ counsel. They are simply citizens, people like myself and yourselves in your individual capacity, not in your official capacity. They come here at their own expense, taking their own time, not because they are men and women of leisure, for they are not; they are wage earners. I come here as their representative as well as in my own personal capacity, not for a fee, for there is none.

We simply come here to present to our representa-

tives our ideas and beliefs upon this question. We forego our personal comfort, our personal duties, and let go for the present the compensation and pay which we would receive if engaged in our regular callings. We do it because we believe that the present question is a vital question and that the present time is a vital time. We believe that a crisis is upon the people of the City of Chicago, not merely for those who are living here today, but for those who are to follow us, for our children and our grandchild, and for the descendants of these for ages to come. We believe that Chicago now has such an opportunity as she will not be likely to get again during the present generation at least. What may happen in the next generation we cannot tell. We have nothing to do with that. We have to do with the present, and all we desire is to perform our duties as citizens thoroughly and well.

That there is an overwhelming sentiment in this community for the public (or municipal) ownership of street railways there can be no question. Those who believed in municipal ownership a year ago last Spring went to work—at their own expense—and obtained a petition of over 100,000 legal voters in this city asking that the question might be submitted to the people of this community in order that they might say whether or not they wanted municipal ownership of street railroads in this city. I need not tell you what that vote was. You all know it. You know that every precinct, every ward, of this city voted for municipal ownership; not a single voting precinct in the entire City of Chicago voted against it. The vote in favor of that proposition was nearly as large as was the vote for the successful candidate for mayor in this city each time that he was a candidate. I venture to say that never in the history of this

country, or in any other country, has such an overwhelming sentiment been expressed by the people upon any public question as that.

Now, why were the people of Chicago so overwhelmingly in favor of public ownership of street railways in this city? And I ask that question of any gentleman on this Committee. And I ask that question of any of the well informed citizens of the City of Chicago. Why was there such a sentiment in favor of public ownership? There can be no doubt but that came about from a deep-seated cause. There was a reason for it, and that reason was that *private ownership had proved a failure*; that the street car companies in the City of Chicago had not furnished satisfactory service to the people of this city; that the experience of the people of this community was such that they felt an overwhelming inclination to rid themselves and the community of private ownership of street car lines in this city; to rid themselves not merely of the present companies, but of any company, because they felt that service would not be rendered properly by any other power except by the people themselves.

It was like a case where a man had been hiring somebody to perform his duties, to render services for him, and found that it had been a failure, found that he had not been served, found that somebody else had been served and found that if he would get proper service he must render it himself. Does this community, or anybody, wish better or stronger evidence than this of the fact that the street car service in this city has, up to the present time, been entirely unsatisfactory to this community? Can there be any other reason for this overwhelming sentiment on the part of the people to banish the present representatives of the people, so far as that service is concerned, and assume and perform that serv-



ice for themselves? Now why is this? Why is it that the people of the city feel so deeply on this question? Let us go back, retrospect a little and see what the people of the City of Chicago have received from these private corporations that have been running our street cars.

In 1858 or '59 the first street car company in Chicago was formed. Its capital was \$100,000. It had 25 horses and 4 cars. Its road in the beginning was a mile long. It was called the Chicago City Railway Company. From that original capital of \$100,000 that company became the richest street railroad corporation in the world. And where did the money come from? It came out of the people of this city.

No doubt you gentlemen who have been in the council for a long time have been studying this question, and no doubt you have read the report of the civic federation of this city made in 1901. Those gentlemen were not believers in municipal ownership; those gentlemen were not radicals, as you may say, upon that question. They were not men who were hostile to capital or hostile to public service corporations, but they were conservative business men of this city. And what do they tell you in that report? You have read there, or can read there, in large part the history of the street railways of the City of Chicago up to that time. We also find from other sources that scarcely had the Chicago City Railway Company received its first charter and its first franchise when it began to prove false to the authority that created it and gave it all its power and privileges. It was to render service for a five-cent fare, from the south side to the west side; but very soon afterwards it sold its west side privileges for more than its original expenditure for the whole concern, and after that persons who wanted to go from the south side to the west side had to pay two fares instead of one as originally. And then what did it do?

When the people of the City of Chicago were resting secure, after they had given this corporation, up to that time everything it had asked, it went straight down to the legislature of the state. They did not go to the Common Council—the company had then used six years only of the privileges that had been granted it—but it went to the state legislature without consulting the people of the City of Chicago, and it undertook to perpetuate its powers and its privileges for nearly a hundred years. Did the citizens of this city desire that?

Some of you may know, or at least have read the history of that transaction, and if you have, you know this: That the citizenship of Chicago protested against it; that when they learned what was doing they held public meetings. The “99-year” act had already passed one branch of the legislature. Committees then went down to Springfield to prevent its passing through the other branch, but they were unable to defeat it. It passed. Then they went to the governor of the state, Richard J. Oglesby, and asked him to veto it, and prevent that outrage upon the people of Chicago, and he did veto it. He gave reasons that would appeal to any man of judgment or honor. But it passed through the legislature of the State of Illinois by a two-third majority, against the protest, against the honest efforts of the people of the City of Chicago.

That was this same Chicago City Railway Company that did that. What was it that induced the legislature of the State of Illinois to betray the citizenship of Chicago? Not only those who were alive, but to betray generations unborn? Need I tell you, gentlemen, what it was? You know what it was. The whole community at the time knew what it was. You know that the representatives of the people in the legislature did not do that

without a consideration, and you know that consideration was foul and criminal.

But notwithstanding that, in 1883 this City Railway Company got another franchise. In the meantime, other street railway corporations had been born and had grown up in this city. They would go to the legislature when it suited them, and go to the council when it suited them. You remember the legislature that was elected in 1894; you remember that these companies went to that legislature, these same street car companies that are now asking favors of the City of Chicago; and you know that they got through that legislature, both branches of it, a measure that paid no regard to the people of this city or the City Council. They got direct through the legislature a law that gave them privileges that were worth untold millions of dollars.

And you know that this was prevented from becoming the law of the State by one man, and that man was Governor John P. Altgeld. (Great applause.)

You know that they went back to the next legislature, the one that was elected in 1896. The people at that time paid little attention to the personnel of the legislators upon the traction question. There were other important questions to be considered. Not a man, perhaps, was elected to the legislature upon the issue of the street car question. But the same influences went down there to Springfield as before, and the so-called "Humphrey bill" was proposed, which extended practically all of these franchises in this city for fifty years. No citizen of Chicago was consulted; neither the Mayor nor the City Council was consulted. But the people in this community, practically all classes, arose and said "No, that is an outrage, and we will not permit it." The City Council, the Mayor, the best citizenship of this city, without re-



gard to occupation or party affiliation, went down to Springfield, or sent delegations down to Springfield, and they prevented the passage of the "Humphrey bill."

But no sooner was that out of the way than the same powers were there with another bill known as the Allen law. The people protested against it. Telegrams were sent against it. The people did all they could in the few days they had after they learned what was going on before the bill was put through the legislature. And you gentlemen know, and every citizen of Chicago knows, how it was put through. You know that representatives of the people were corrupted, and you know that it has been a stigma upon every member of the legislature from that hour to this that cast his vote for the so-called Allen bill. Why was this done? It was done to prevent the people of the City of Chicago from passing upon these questions. They sought first to ignore the people of Chicago, to ignore the Mayor and Council of the City of Chicago, and it was the efforts of the citizenship of this city, backed by most of the press of this city, that finally brought about the repeal of the Allen law before any great amount of mischief was done under it. The council refused to act under it at all.

These are the companies that now are coming to this council and asking for further privileges and favors. You know that we have been having for years extremely poor street car service. You must know, I am very sure the people whom I represent here to-day know, that there has been scarcely a measure passed by this City Council for the protection of the citizenship of this city, to compel these corporations to perform their duties to the public, that has not been ignored by the companies as long as they could ignore it, and when they were forced by the process of the law to obey, they still re-

fused compliance and compelled the people of this community, through their officials, to go to the highest courts in the state to have their laws and their ordinances obeyed.

Let me remind you of a little matter that occurred recently. A number of years ago the City Council passed an ordinance providing and requiring these street car companies to give certain transfers. You remember that passengers were charged two fares to go from the central part of the city on the north side to Rogers Park, where I live, and such was the case in other parts of the city. The ordinance was passed regulating this, but there was no effort to enforce it until after a considerable length of time. Finally the people out in Austin, to whom it applied as well as the north part of the city, took up the matter and they began to prosecute the Chicago Union Traction Company for violating that ordinance and not giving these transfers that ordinance required. And you remember what happened when the Company was sued by the City for a violation of that ordinance. You know what was done with juries. You know that attorneys for the Company, a number of them, were arrested for bribing the juries, some of them even pleaded guilty to that charge, and other were convicted; that the juries were bribed there is no question in the minds of the people of this community. I remember that after Judge Ball had rendered his decision holding that the ordinance was valid and binding and that the Council had a right to pass it, they still refused to obey it or allow it to be enforced. That was true on the south side as well as on the north side.

While the matter was pending in the Supreme Court, from time to time, I saw personally the conduct of the North Side Company. Night after night when I went

to my home, after I passed Graceland avenue I was asked for another fare, but being a pretty good sized man and not accustomed to being robbed or bulldozed, I refused. They didn't attempt to put me off the car; but I saw women and little girls and weak or uninformed men compelled to pay a second fare. That was done over and over again, day after day. Thousands of dollars were taken in that way out of the people of that part of the city alone. The street car boys didn't want to do it. I know how they felt about it because I talked with some of them about it. They said:

"We wouldn't do this if we could help it, but our positions depend upon our doing it." I said to them a number of times:

"Don't you know that this is contrary to an ordinance of the City of Chicago that has been upheld by Judge Ball and, in my judgment, will be upheld by the Supreme Court of the State?"

They said, "It makes no difference; we are ordered to collect these fares or threaten to put them off; we must not put anybody off by force—that might involve the company in trouble or expense, but if we can get the people to pay it by threats and intimidation, we are instructed to take the money." And they did it.

The same thing was done on the south side (I am informed) by the Chicago City Railway, and, I repeat, thousands of dollars were taken out of poor girls and boys and men and women and put into the pockets of these street railway companies of this city in violation of the law. Had these nickels been taken in this way by a highwayman upon the street, the law would have come in and the public officials would have said, "That is highway robbery; we will send the scoundrels to the penitentiary."



That transfer case went to the Supreme Court of the state; it was decided in favor of the ordinance. Judge Ball was upheld. But have you ever heard of the City Railway or the Union Traction Company, or the Consolidated Traction Company, returning the thousands of dollars to the people of this city that they took out of them by this intimidation and outrage? Do you wonder that the people of the City of Chicago became tired, became incensed, became indignant, and said:

“We owe these street car companies nothing; they have betrayed us from the time of their inception to this hour; they are corporations created to get money for dividends to stockholders.

“That is what they are for. That is their purpose and their aim and they respect nothing else and regard nothing else; we cannot trust these street car companies nor trust any other; we want to do *our* business for ourselves.” (Applause.)

Some of you gentlemen are business men. You have had occasion and doubtless will have occasion in the future to employ people to do work for you, to represent you. What would you think if your agent, or your representative, would conduct your business and would serve you as these street car companies have served the people of the City of Chicago? There is not a man among you that would stand it for an hour, if you knew it. You would kick him out of your employ, and if you could get the evidence you would send him to the penitentiary where he belonged. But suppose he should say, “Please hire me over again; give me a new chance; perhaps I will do better in the future.” Would you do it? If you did do it, you would expect to be sent very shortly either to the insane asylum of the state or to a school for the committee, or at least a sub-feeble minded. And yet this committee of it, seems to be seriously considering the

question of giving to the Chicago City Railway a franchise for twenty years more.

Now these are some reasons why the people of this city are asking for municipal ownership. Don't you think they ought to try to get it?

Did you ever in your lives hear of a wrong without a remedy? If you will read the history of this country, or if you will read the history of any other country, when the people—or some of them—were seeking to better the condition of the community, and seeking to right some wrong that the people had been suffering, some people would always say: "We can't do it; we have to submit." All along the ages the same kind of argument has been brought forth by some of the people. But there always have been a few, very nearly always, at first called "impractical," sometimes they were called "agitators," and sometimes called "wild-eyed," and other names of that kind. But these have said, "Where there is a wrong there should be a remedy, and it is the duty of every good citizen to seek out and find that remedy."

Why, I remember—and I am not an old man, at least I don't feel old—when I was a little boy, along about 1859 I was living in a little town in this state where my father died in 1854, and my mother said to me one Sunday, "I want you to go with me to the Presbyterian Church today to hear the sermon of a minister." She was a Methodist, and as a rule went to that church. The reason she wanted to go to the Presbyterian was that the minister was going to preach a sermon on the subject of slavery and she wanted to hear what he had to say. There were a good many abolitionists in that little town who believed slavery was wrong, believing it was a crime, a terrible sin, and the church was crowded with people.

I remember that minister well, and he was not a bad man, either; he was really a good man at heart, an honest, upright man. He opened the lids of the Bible and he read several texts and he preached his sermon. I cannot remember the details of it; my mind was too young to grasp all that he said; but I remember this: That he absolutely proved by scripture that slavery was right; he absolutely proved that because it was right it would exist forever and, he said, "there was no use preaching against it, no use fighting against it, because it could not be helped: it was one of the things that we had to endure and had to bear." And I saw a gray-haired and gray-whiskered old man get up in that audience; he was not a preacher, he was simply a citizen, a member of the church. He said, in substance:

"I want to protest against what you have uttered; God never made any such statement as you say. Slavery is a curse and an evil, and God Almighty in His own good time will wipe it out."

But the preacher silenced him and let him say no more. That was in 1859. The next year Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States and long before his first term had expired he wrote the Emancipation Proclamation. And a little time later Lyman Trumbull, one of our citizens of Chicago, with his own right hand wrote the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States that abolished slavery forever. (Applause.)

Ah, gentlemen! I undertake to say that where there is a wrong there is a remedy.

Now will anybody question what I have said in regard to the conduct of these street car companies? Will anybody question but what they ought to be gotten rid of if we can possibly do it? Will anybody uphold them



in their nefarious work? I would like to see the man who could stand up before an audience in Chicago and say of the Chicago City Railway Company or of the Chicago Union Traction Company, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." (Great laughter and applause.)

You know they have betrayed every trust, and you know that we have been during these years practically in the hands of freebooters. If this work had been done by individuals instead of by corporations all would concede their place to be in the penitentiary of the state. They have committed crimes enough to keep them there a natural human lifetime.

And yet it is said, "We cannot help it—we have got to have them." Now, there are some of us who do not believe that. You heard Mr. Bonney this morning, and he talked in detail of temporary relief by simply licensing the roads and of compelling good service. Any lawyer knows—and I observe a number of lawyers on this committee—that under the police powers of Chicago they can be compelled to render good service; that they can be licensed and that they can be compelled to perform their duty as licensees and the service of this city greatly improved if the City of Chicago sees fit to exercise the power it possesses.

Now, in deference to this sentiment of the people expressed a year ago last April there was a cry for a Municipal Ownership Enabling Act. It was said by this city, and the Mayor and the Council of this city, "We must have an Enabling Act." The Mayor said over and over again that he would not consider any franchise, as far as he was concerned, until they did have such an Enabling Act. I believe a bill was prepared and proposed in the Council by Alderman Finn. Another was prepared by

Alderman Jackson; such an act as the Council, or at least those gentlemen, believed would be sufficient to bring about municipal ownership in the City of Chicago; that, at least, would enable the people of Chicago to get municipal ownership if they should desire it.

But finally a measure was introduced in the legislature by Mr. Carl Mueller, a state senator on the north side. I was for a time a constituent of Senator Mueller. I never heard that he was particularly a friend of municipal ownership. But the bill that he offered in the senate was endorsed by a good many people in this community. It is said to have been written by a gentleman connected with the Municipal Voters' League. How that is, I do not know. But I know this, and it has been already told you today, that the Mayor of the city endorsed that measure. I believe I am correct in stating that the City Council endorsed it. I *know* I am correct in stating that a number of gentlemen on this committee endorsed it and that other people and distinguished members of the City Council endorsed it as a Municipal Ownership Enabling Act.

Now I know some people make mistakes. We are all liable to. It may be that you gentlemen, or those of you who endorsed that as a Municipal Ownership Enabling Act, were mistaken. It may be that measure is not in every respect what it might have been. But it did receive the endorsement of the legislative and executive departments of this city, and through the influence of the City Council and the Mayor, and such men as Mr. Graeme Stewart and other citizens, the legislature of the state was induced to pass it. So far as I am concerned, it seems clear to me that if the proper effort is put forth, municipal ownership can be gotten out of that Mueller law. I do think that it could have been improved; I think it could have been made better, but per-

haps I am mistaken. Any measure that the legislature might pass would have been contested in the courts. There is no doubt about that. These street car companies will not let go any of their privileges or rights, or asserted rights, without a contest. Any measure that pointed to municipal ownership, or was thought to be of such a character as could bring it about, would have been opposed by these same men and companies. They would fight it in the courts. They will contest it to the very last ditch; and any measure that could have been prepared or proposed would have been compelled to run the gauntlet of their opposition and their hostility.

But certainly this Council has no right to question that measure. The Mayor of this city has no right to question that measure. They said that it was a Municipal Ownership Enabling Act such as we wanted, and it is their bounden duty, not only to the people of the City of Chicago who want municipal ownership and expressed it in the most positive way, but it is their duty to themselves. They owe it to their own reputations, to go to work, persistently, energetically and intelligently, to get municipal ownership out of it.

Did you ask for the Mueller bill for the benefit of the next generation? Did you offer this measure to the Mayor and Council that is to be twenty years hence? Was it that? If you were unable to devise a law that you yourselves could use to bring about municipal ownership, what sort of right had you to assume to produce one for the next generation? (Applause.)

Now, what has been done toward bringing about municipal ownership? What has been done by the City Council, or this honorable committee, looking toward municipal ownership, toward bringing it about? To be sure, we don't know how extensive the investigations of this committee, or of the sub-committee, have been. The



people of this community don't know what has passed in the negotiations between this committee and representatives of the Chicago City Railway. They assume, of course, that everything has been right and proper, and I am not here to question that. But the arguments pro and con, the discussions between the members upon the question of municipal ownership, if there have been any, we know nothing about. They have not been printed in the papers and no citizen that I have ever heard of, who was not a member or an officer of the committee, or an employe of the committee, or a representative of the Chicago City Railway Company, knows anything about what they were. Don't understand me in any way to reflect upon the committee, but I simply call your attention to this: That whatever effort has been made in the way of research, in the way of investigation, in the way of study, in the way of argument, upon that question is a profound secret to the people of Chicago today.

Whether these gentlemen believe in municipal ownership or not, I do not know; but certainly they do not believe in it in the way that some of us believe in it. How do you expect that anybody will ever get anything unless they try for it? That is one of the first lessons my mother taught me. When I told her that my lesson was hard, she said, "Try, my boy; try; study," and she handed to me a little poem that was printed in a little school book. It said:

"Try, try, again;  
If at first you don't succeed,  
Try, try, again."

She told me that really there was no such word as *fail* in any laudable undertaking or in any honorable undertaking. Suppose I had said, "Oh, mother, I can't; I can't get it (I was a rather dull pupil). I can't get this arithmetic lesson, I can't get his reading lesson, I

can't get this grammar lesson." What do you suppose would have become of me? Now if that is a good lesson for a pupil is it not a good one for a people, for any one in a community who desires to accomplish anything? Don't you think it is worthy of imitation on the part of the representatives of the people in a great city like Chicago? Now you gentlemen *may have* tried, but if you have, the citizens of Chicago know nothing about it. So far as I have ever been able to learn, it has been *assumed* that you could not do it, and therefore *you could not*. The people of Chicago voted for it overwhelmingly—more than five to one. You recommended a law to the legislature of the state which you said would bring about municipal ownership, and though that legislature passed it a long time ago, there hasn't anything been done that I have heard of by the City Council of this city to indicate that any effort ever has been made to bring about municipal ownership sooner than twenty years from now.

Now this is a strange situation. Are you going to say to the people, are you going to say to the representatives of the laboring people of Chicago, to the representatives of the Municipal Ownership Delegate Convention of Chicago, and these other societies, are you going to say to the nearly 150,000 people who voted for Municipal Ownership, "Come and tell us how to get it; you come and tell us how to get it." Why should *we* tell the City Council how to get municipal ownership? (Applause.) We are simply people; we earn our bread by the sweat of our faces; we are not salaried and paid by this municipality. We have no more or greater duty to perform than the humblest citizen of the city. As I said a while ago, we have taken our time and put forth our efforts to do what we can to help bring about municipal ownership.

But, gentlemen, the City Council of the City of Chicago are our representatives. The Mayor of the City of Chicago is our representative. They are paid annually considerably more than \$100,000 to serve the people of this community. They are supposed to be learned in municipal affairs. They are supposed to have at heart the well being of the community. They are paid for their time. Not only that, it is the duty of the city government, the Mayor and Council, to do what they can for the community, but they have a legal department, too, paid by this community. Not only have they a regular legal department, but they have employed special counsel, able lawyers, men learned in the law, paid big fees, no doubt, as they should be (no lawyer is going to kick on another lawyer's fees). (Laughter.)

But if these attorneys who have been employed specially have ever put in a single hour in trying to devise ways and means to bring about municipal ownership in the City of Chicago, I have never heard of it. (Applause.) Those gentlemen are not paid by the Chicago City Railway Company except as that railway company pays taxes, and nobody has ever accused it of paying any more taxes than it ought to have paid, and the Supreme Court of this state has said, in effect, that they have paid much less than one-tenth of what they ought to have paid during the last twenty years. It is the people who pay these officials and attorneys, and pay them to serve them. Now those gentlemen by simply saying, "We cannot have it," and this honorable committee and the City Council by saying, "Our attorneys tell us that we cannot have it, *therefore we cannot have it*. And then to come to us, come to the Federation of Labor, to the wage earners of Chicago, come to lawyers like myself, who have to earn every dollar they get, and by the hardest knocks, and say, "You tell us how to get municipal ownership."



But this Council sub-committee has produced *something*. I have here in my hand something which we are to discuss. It is an ordinance *for* the Chicago City Railway Company—it looks very much like it was *for* the Chicago City Railway Company. (Applause.) But I am afraid it is not *for* the people. Now, I haven't the time to discuss that ordinance in detail. I haven't even had the time to read it with care. I read it, however, so that I know substantially what it contains. And it seems that these special attorneys and the whole legal department of Chicago who have been called to assist in this matter, together with this honorable committee, have been able to produce just one thing.

They seem to have been studying all the time—instead of studying Municipal Ownership—*studying franchises*. They seem to have been thoroughly informed upon the franchise question, and they have produced this. They have either forgotten or they have ignored the entire history of the Chicago City Railway Company, or **else they** never knew it. They seem to have forgotten that that Railway Company, almost from the time it was created, has failed to perform its duties to the citizenship of this City. I will not repeat what I said as to some of the things it did. But you gentlemen know, no doubt, that it never has performed its duty to the people of this community in the way of paying taxes.

You know that this company, with twenty others of the public service corporations of this city, have been evading their just taxes for years, that they have had a very powerful influence upon some of our public servants down at Springfield, called the State Board of Equalization, and that that board very kindly and generously allowed them to escape paying the principal part of their taxes.

Now I am not going to criticise harshly any of the

people of this city, but it does seem to me a little odd, as it does to the people whom I represent here today, that the richest corporations in this city should for years have been able to escape their taxes, and that not until the School Teachers of this City, and the women teachers at that, who had no votes, had to take up that question and did take it up. That at their own expense they hired lawyers and went down before that Board of Equalization, and there met face to face the representatives of these great public service corporations, and finally by a writ of mandamus from the Circuit Court compelled that board to assess these corporations upon their franchises and their capital stock. (Applause.)

Why, one gentleman said to me today, "We would like to grant to the people of the City of Chicago municipal ownership if we only had the money, but where are we going to get the money?" You just study the history of the public service corporations of this city a little and the other big wealthy corporations of this city, and study the way they have been evading their taxes during the last twenty years, and you will find that if the public officials of the City of Chicago had done their duty and had done the work that these school teachers of Chicago did, you would have had a mighty full treasury. (Applause.)

We could have taken over these street car companies without a word, and this excuse that we haven't got the money would never have been heard.

I want to call your attention to another thing. We have had an object lesson right in this city recently, the weakness—not to say folly—of allowing the public service of this city to be performed by a private corporation. You have seen a strike of the street car men on the south side.

Now I hope that none of you gentlemen will think that because I have been one of the attorneys for the strikers that I am prejudiced, for that reason, against the Chicago City Railway Company. I am not. I think the general conduct of the Chicago City Railway Company has been as good, but no better, than the conduct of the other public service corporations in this city. They have simply performed their duties when they could not help it. (Laughter and applause.) And that is what they have been doing all these years. We have seen the whole south side of the city denied transportation. You have seen one-half of the police force of this city used to assist these people—the Chicago City Railway Company—in running their cars. You have seen an Honorable Committee of this Council and the Mayor work day and night and beg the Chicago City Railway Company to settle this strike peaceably. I will leave it to that committee themselves to say whether or not the men that went before it, representing the employes of the company, were not fair from start to finish, and were not ready to do anything that was fair and honorable to settle that strike. And who stood in the way of arbitration? The men offered arbitration from the start, and when the State Board of Arbitration intervened and said, “In the name of the law and for the peace of the state, we want you to settle this matter amicably,” the men said, “Yes, we will,” but this corporation said “No, sir.” They spurned every effort at conciliation and it was not until the Mayor and City Council most persistently insisted and demanded that it be settled peaceably that the company agreed to anything like fair terms.

If the Chicago City Railway Company would demean itself before the people of this city, and before the Mayor and the Council of this city in that way, at a time when its franchise had expired, and when it was asking for a



new one, what would it do if granted another twenty-year franchise? (Applause.)

Now there is something here that I want to call your attention to. In one of the schedules added to this ordinance, on page 69, is just what the people of Chicago must expect if this franchise is granted. Now this is the statement of the company itself. It is its own idea of what is going to happen in the future—if it gets a franchise. It estimates an expenditure of \$2,000,000 in twenty years “To provide for strikes or avoidance of strikes,” averaging \$100,000 a year on that account. It has figured up every year what is likely to occur and it is likely to expend. That is five per cent a year on a two million dollar investment that the company itself estimates. They estimate they will have to pay this out on account of strikes. Do you wonder that the laboring people of Chicago are a little bit leery about giving this company this ordinance?

I am not here to say that municipal ownership in Chicago is an easy thing. It is not an easy thing. Very few things that are important and very valuable are easy to get. The Almighty did not put gold on trees or scatter it along the highways. He put it in the rocks and in the ravines and covered it up so that it is hard to get. And so it is with everything that is valuable. You have got to work for it. It takes skill, it takes labor, it takes industry, it takes ingenuity, and it takes good old fashioned honesty to get anything that is real good in this world. And it takes that to bring about municipal ownership. I repeat, I know it is hard to get municipal ownership. It was hard to obtain American liberty. In 1775 and '76 there were people who said, “We cannot fight Great Britain, we cannot fight England, we have to remain subjects,” but Patrick Henry said, “They tell us,

sir, that we are weak, unable to cope with so formidable an adversary, but," he said, "when shall we be stronger? Will it be the next week or the next year, or will it be when the enemy has bound us hand and foot? Shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction?" "No," he said, "thanks to God we are not weak," and he appealed to the God of battles, and his appeal was heard. And this people, when only three million strong, went to war and they fought eight long years for your liberty and my liberty and the liberty of our children and their descendants. Just so here. Are the people of Chicago today free? Are they free when they have these public service corporations on every hand, conducting themselves as I have shown you, and I haven't shown you half, what these street car companies have been doing. The people made these corporations. They are our *own* corporations. And they have become so powerful, so strong, so arrogant as to have us practically in their grasp. Now is an opportunity to rid ourselves of some of them, at least keep ourselves from longer remaining in their power. Do you think it is a mistake on our part, on the part of these laboring people of Chicago, to come to you and ask you to do something now when it is practicable? Do you wonder that they are surprised and mortified that valuable months have been spent in producing a document like that (referring to the printed ordinance) for a street car company that has never respected your wishes, nor the wishes of this community, or the laws of the state or the laws of the city?

Now I was going to read you something from this Mueller law, but I will not take the time to do it. You, no doubt, have read that law—at least I presume so. I don't think a member of the City Council of Chicago would endorse a measure that he had not read. (Applause.)

I know it is not going to be an easy thing to get municipal ownership out of that law or any other law that the legislature might pass. I know that you will meet obstacles on every hand. I know that you will have the united opposition, not only of the street railway corporations of this city, but of all the great public service corporations of this city, of all the great public service corporations of this country, yes, of all the great public service corporations of Europe—they will all unite. They have fastened themselves on the people; they have grown enormously rich; they count their wealth by millions, yea, by billions; and they know how to use their wealth. They believe themselves omnipotent.

I need not tell you gentlemen what these corporations have done, for every well informed citizen in Chicago knows what *our own* corporations have done. There is much complaint about corruption in the nation, in the State, in the counties, many of them, and in the cities of this country. Who has been behind all this corruption? Where did it come from? Who is it that corrupts State Boards of Equalization? Who it is that corrupts state legislatures? Who is it that wrongly influences city councils in some places? It is these public service corporations. They have the money. Think of it—the corporations the people have made, take a little of the money that they have gotten from the people, and then they corrupt the servants of the people and continue their power and increase their strength. If that is not bondage, what is it? If that is not slavery, what is it? If that is not something that every honest man ought to want to get rid of, what in the name of heaven would he want to escape?

I want to tell you, gentlemen, that this is a critical period in the history of Chicago and in the history of this country, for there is no city in America that is situ-



ated like Chicago. Already across the seas, in monarchies, in governments not of the people like ours, the people are taking over to themselves these public service corporations. I think it would do the membership of this committee good to take a little trip across the briney deep this winter. I think it would do my friend Alderman Mavor good to go back to his native heath, Scotland, and visit Glasgow and investigate how it was that Glasgow was enabled to bring about municipal ownership of her public utilities. And then visit Liverpool and Leeds and see how they do it. Find out the obstacles they had to overcome and how they overcame them. You won't find that it was easy. Yet they accomplished it, and I think that what Scotland and England, what Glasgow, Liverpool and Leeds can accomplish, the City of Chicago can accomplish. I don't think Chicago is willing to take second place to any municipality on this earth. (Applause.) Did you ever know Chicago to undertake in dead earnest to do anything that she did not do? Do you suppose that in 1892, and prior to that time, if the people of Chicago had said, if the City Council and the Mayor and public citizens has said, "We can't get the fair here, we can't handle it," that we would ever have gotten the World's Fair and have shown to all the world the grandest, the most beautiful spectacle that was ever produced for the eye of man?

Do you think that in 1871 when the city was burned, when the heart was burnt out of it, if the people of Chicago had said, "Oh, we cannot rebuild, we can't do that," that Chicago ever would have been rebuilt and have become the splendid city that she is?

I want to tell you, my friends, that Chicago *can* have municipal ownership. (Applause.) She can't get it tomorrow, she can't get it next week. She can't get it next

year. She may not even have succeeded fully in getting it within the next five years, but I want to say to you that if she does not go to work, if our public officials, our Mayor and our City Council do not *go to work and try to get it, she never will get it*. That is certain. The matter is in your hands absolutely. There never, in my judgment, has come such an opportunity before to any body of men on this earth as has come to the City Council of the City of Chicago at this time. (Applause.) I want to tell you that municipal ownership in the municipalities of the United States is coming. It is going to come because the people know what they want, because the common people, and especially the toilers of this country, know what they want. If some of the business men, some of the "better citizens," so called, have not been studying this question and informing themselves upon this question, the toilers of this country have been studying it. They are the ones who have felt the strong arm of these public service corporations. They know what they are. They know their tyranny, they know their injustice, they know they worship the God of money and nothing else; that they respect neither man, woman nor child. That all they want is money, and that they have been grinding that out of the toilers of this country. They have made up their minds that they have suffered long enough from these corporations. They say, "that this is our country; this is a government of the people, by the people and for the people—theoretically. We have made up our minds *that we are going to make it such in fact*." (Applause.)

The opportunity to lead the way has come to Chicago; and is our City Council and our Mayor now going to say, "*We can't do it?* Are we going to surrender like old Philadelphia, and let the public service corporations run us?" If so, the next thing you will see will be that

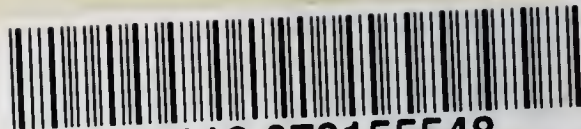
some corporation will come here and want to buy your waterworks, and you will sell them. They will come here and they will want to take away from you your electric lighting plant that you already have. They did that with old Philadelphia, with regard to her gas works—that once grand city, where the cradle of liberty was rocked. I tell you, my friends, you have a grand opportunity. It is such an opportunity that will never again in your lifetimes, in my judgment, come to a City Council. I would like to be a member of this City Council. Not that I am any wiser than any of you gentlemen, not that I am any more loyal than any of you gentlemen. But I would like to be a member of a body of public servants who had the intelligence, who had the honesty, who had the opportunity and tenacity of purpose to serve the people by establishing municipal ownership in the City of Chicago. (Applause.)

I have made this talk under great difficulties. I have not had the time to make the preparation to discuss this ordinance in detail as much as I should like. I came practically from a sick bed to talk here this afternoon upon this subject. There is a great deal more to say, but others are to follow. The other side of this question is to be discussed, as I understand it, and I expect to ask to be heard again before this debate closes.

In closing now I want to say that the Mayor and the City Council of Chicago for the years 1903 and '04 are destined to immortality. Whatever your conduct shall be it will immortalize the body that represents in the Council at this time the people of Chicago. *Whether it shall be immortal glory or not depends upon you.* (Applause.)







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